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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2004

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER  
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEALS

Verheugen: "Turkey is the Key Country" - Milliyet  
Erdogan Warns Iraqi Kurds - Milliyet  
National Security Briefing from TGS to Erdogan - Sabah  
4.5-hour Briefing from Military to Erdogan - Hurriyet  
Erdogan Warns Kurds: "Don't Play with Fire" - Hurriyet  
Prodi and Verheugen in Ankara Today - Hurriyet  
Erdogan: "If Iraq disintegrates, we'll Intervene" - Turkiye

OPINION MAKERS

Erdogan Briefed by TGS - Yeni Safak  
Harsh Warning from Erdogan to Iraqi Kurds - Yeni Safak  
KHK is on US Terrorist List - Cumhuriyet  
Historic Visit from Europe - Cumhuriyet  
Erdogan Will Ask Annan to Resume Talks - Radikal

BRIEFING:

Prodi and Verheugen in Ankara Today: All papers and TV channels report on the visit of EU Commissioner Verheugen and EU President Prodi to Turkey today. Since this is the first visit by an EU President to Turkey in over forty years, most papers categorize the visit as 'historic.' "Cumhuriyet" says that Prodi has come to Turkey to review progress on the implementation of reforms. "Zaman" notes that Prodi has indicated that human rights issues will be at the top of his agenda. "Radikal" claims that Ankara will give Prodi the message that while Turkey will continue efforts to find a Cyprus solution, the Turks are not willing to 'give up' Cyprus to attain a date for EU accession talks.

TGS Briefs PM Erdogan: All papers report on the national security briefing TGS gave to Prime Minister Erdogan yesterday. Following the 4.5-hour briefing, a short statement by the TGS said that the prime minister was briefed on national security issues. Most papers report that the briefing focused on Cyprus. Objections to the Annan Plan were reportedly discussed by the military force commanders, and the TGS proposed a number of changes that would be necessary to make the plan negotiable. In addition to the Cyprus issue, "Cumhuriyet" reports that Erdogan was warned about the government's partisan appointments to the bureaucracy and the military's concerns about fundamentalist activities and statements.

Erdogan Warns Iraqi Kurds: "Milliyet" reports that during his meeting with Iraqi Shiite leader Abdulaziz Al-Hakim, Prime Minister Erdogan warned Iraqi Kurds about their efforts to establish a Kurdish federation in Northern Iraq. Erdogan stressed the importance of Iraqi territorial integrity, and accused the Kurds of 'playing with fire' in the region. If Iraq were to break apart, Erdogan said, Turkey will intervene. The Prime Minister claimed that Iraq's other neighbors could intervene as well.

EDITORIAL OPINION:

"Iraq And Cyprus"

Fikret Bila opines in mass appeal Milliyet (1/15): "Prior to PM Erdogan's meetings with President Bush and UN General Secretary Annan, Ankara is defining its policy increasingly

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on two issues: Iraq and Cyprus..Yesterday's TGS briefing for Erdogan and the upcoming NSC meeting are steps in this process. After each step Ankara's stance is becoming more clear.Following the meetings with Syria and Iran, Ankara is now trying to improve its relations with the groups in Iraq. Ankara is organizing itself to oppose the Kurdish federation in northern Iraq and work against the disintegration of Iraq together with Iraq's neighboring countries and with the Iraqi groups. Erdogan's message to Shiite leader Al-Hakim that `if Iraq disintegrates neighboring countries will intervene' is proof of that approach. .We can say that during his meetings with Bush and Annan, Erdogan will ask both men to pressure the Greek side to solve the Cyprus issue. Erdogan also plans to convince Annan to consider Turkish demands concerning the details of the plan. Progress on the Iraq and Cyprus issues will affect Turkey's future as well. Therefore, Ankara is defining its state policy step by step. All the support Turkey has given to the US, including the use of Incirlik air base, was designed to gain expected support from the US for Turkey's Iraq and Cyprus policy. Erdogan's meetings with Bush and Annan will show if Turkey gets what it expects.' EDELMAN